

Key Messages about Swine Flu

1 Like you, we don't know what's going to happen next either.

Flu pandemics are unpredictable. From the beginning, we have had to prepare for a wide range of possibilities – and we still do. We will continue to err on the alarming side, convinced that it's better to over-prepare than to under-prepare, until we are sure the pandemic is over.

2 We probably haven't seen the last of swine flu.

It may come back soon, or not for many months. It may come back as a pandemic third wave, or as a new seasonal strain. Either way, getting vaccinated now against swine flu is a sensible precaution.

3 So far the pandemic has been mild.

It sure didn't feel that way if you were among its victims, or their families and friends. But the truth is, we were lucky (most of us). This isn't the pandemic that health officials were worried about, at least not yet. It's a real pandemic, and it has killed way more children than the average seasonal flu. But overall, it is less deadly so far than the average seasonal flu.

4 We may still face the pandemic officials were worried about.

Swine flu could mutate to become more severe. A new, worse pandemic could emerge – maybe bird flu; maybe something completely new. What has happened already is a tragedy for many people. But it is a practice run for all of us – not a false alarm – and we should see it that way.